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252 *Taro leaves.*—Taro leaves (*e u*) are a delicacy, whose virtues Marquesans have always appreciated, though their present methods of preparation—boiling with coconut milk or baking with salt pork—are of Tahitian origin. *Hue taitio* is a genuine native dish, however. A package of young taro leaves is wrapped in many layers of *fau* or breadfruit leaves, which protect it from too intense a heat, and cooked upon charcoals above ground. When the steamed taro leaves are removed, the package is cut into slices, dipped into sea water, and eaten—whence the name, *hue taitio*, which describes the bowl (*hue*), the sea water (*tai*), and the sound made [271] by sucking the delicacy (*tia*). The sea water is of course drunk when the taro leaves have been eaten. Young *ihi* (*Inocorpus eduli*) leaves are prepared in the same fashion. Coconut milk is sometimes used instead of sea water. A further use of taro leaves will be described with the preparation of meat.

Piahi.—In general anything grated and mixed with coconut milk, and baked in a loaf is called a *piahi*. Taro, yams, and manioc are all used to make *piahi*. Probably a *piahi* was made in the old days of wild arrowroot (*pia taki oho au*).

The *ihi* nut (*Inocarpus edulis*), which may be roasted and eaten in the same way as the chestnut of America, is delicious when made into a *piahi*. The nut is cut open with an axe (formerly, the natives say, there grew an *ihi* which could be bitten open or torn apart with the fingers), the kernel is removed and soaked overnight, so that the dark skin can be peeled off. [412] The kernel is then grated (in former times on the tail of a skate) into the coconut milk, the immediate immersion in the liquid preventing it from turning dark and rancid. The milk and gratings are stirred constantly until a thick batter is formed. This is wrapped in banana leaves in long, flat packages, and baked in the oven.

Sometimes, when the new breadfruit season is beginning to show its promise in new young fruits, a green breadfruit is picked to make *ka'aku* but green fruit is not very satisfactory, for the flesh is lumpy and hard to pound. The product is contemptuously called, *ka'aku tu tai peto* (dog's dung, *ka'aku*).

Bananas.—Bananas are eaten raw or are baked in their skins. Some- [251] times they are preserved by drying. Having been first split with the thumb into their three segments and sunned for three or four days, they are wrapped tightly in banana leaves and bark. Prepared in this way they will keep for several months. These uses of bananas, however, are of recent and varied introduction. Porter (24, p. 94) describes the native method of ripening them: